What The First Bomb on North Vietnam Will Destroy, P. 2

The Advice the President Seems On The Verge of Disregarding

"We have been patient for five years with those who offered a military solution in Vietnam. . . . Now let us be equally patient in the effort to find a peaceful solution."
—McGovern (D., S. Dak) in a Senate speech Jan. 20

"We cannot expect that a conflict which has raged so bitterly for so long will be quickly or easily resolved. . . . We are concerned that unless we can halt or reverse the escalation of the last months it will become increasingly difficult to achieve a further pause, a cease-fire and meaningful negotiations."
—Letter to the President by 76 Democratic Congressmen

"I do not believe that we will make any critical point, solve any dilemma or move along the way to an honorable settlement now by resumed or by larger bombings."
—Senator John Sherman Cooper (R., Ky), Jan. 26

"If there is a likelihood of a slowdown of the fighting . . . I would not resume bombing."
—Senator George D. Aiken (R., Vt) Jan. 26

I. F. Stone's Weekly

VOL XIV, NO. 4 JANUARY 31, 1966 WASHINGTON, D. C. 15 CENTS

Guns and Butter: Billions for One, Millions for the Other

Our private economy is run for private profit. Our public economy is run for war. All other activities in either are peripheral. This is the real design of our Society, whether Great or just Swollen, as its outline may be perceived in the annual budget. In the private economy, the rule is free rein for the exploitation of human and material resources; the protective restrictions are minimal and relatively recent; the funds required to repair the resultant wastage of human and natural resources are meagre and newly won. But war is industry's No. 1 Customer; the military represent by far our biggest and oldest bureaucracy. Overnight the President can add $15 billions in supplemental appropriations for a miserable, distant and unpopular war, and it will be a miracle if anyone in Congress dares vote against "giving our boys all they need," though this tender concern does not extend to asking why send them there in the first place. But there are plenty to grumble because the budget adds another $250 millions to that feeble little skirmish known as the war on poverty. (Even our metaphors have to be martial.)

More Tender With Missiles Than Men

In the budgeting for human welfare, the butter is everywhere spread thin. In the huge confines of the $60 billion allotted to the military for the next fiscal year, the portions are generous, even in areas thought of as civilian. In the allocation of Federal funds to "education, training and related functions," for example, 25% goes to the Defense Department, and this figure does not include "specialized military training such as recruit and pilot training." In the next fiscal year the Pentagon will spend more than twice as much in this category as the poverty program. The latter, for all its training projects including Head Start, Job Corps and Vista, will get $1,010 millions. The Pentagon share of the education pie will be $2,209 million. Another way to measure the poverty program is to dive into the huge confines of the budget and find that the war on poverty will get a half billion less next fiscal year than the total we will spend on research and development of missiles ($2,314 million). We are spending more on developing "a new generation" (as the Pentagon's tenderly philoprogenitive language puts it) of missiles—such as Minuteman III—than we are on developing a better generation in our slums. Total military research and development ($6,893 millions) is almost four times as big as the whole poverty program ($1,750 millions).

Far Cheaper To Pension Them Off

To get an idea of the spiraling cost to the U.S. of fighting the war in Vietnam—American ground forces and the helicopters that support them, alone, are firing 100 million dollars' worth of ammunition each month. That means, in this single category of battle expense, it takes up to $35,000 to kill each Communist now being reported as a fatality. Over and above this cost, 110 million dollars worth of ammunition, missiles and bombs is "expended" each month by the Air Force Navy air arm. These figures were revealed January 20 by Secretary McNamara . . . seeking an additional $12.7 billion to help pay for the war.
—U.S. News & World Report, Jan. 31

Another measure of the favored place occupied by the military bureaucracy is in the field of housing. In the three fiscal years of '65, '66 and '67, military family housing allowances will add up to almost exactly as much as urban renewal and public housing combined. Here are the figures in millions of dollars:

	'65	'66	'67	Total
M. F. H.	619	650	545	1,814
Urban Renewal	324	362	413	1,099
Public Housing	230	249	261	740

We do not begrudge the military their housing allowances. We only cite the figures as a measure of how little we are doing in the crucial field of urban renewal and public housing. This ranks with education as the two most important sectors of the fight to save a whole generation of youth from moral decay in our urban jungles. It is also a fight to save our cities from race war. Only a few weeks ago a little noticed report warned that conditions in the national capital are worse in this respect than they were in Los Angeles on the eve of the Watts rioting. Such are the risks we run at home while we escalate abroad.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Resumption of Aerial Attack Prepared While Signs of De-Escalation Ignored

Johnson's Credibility Will Be The First Victim of The First Bomb

If the bombing of the North resumes, it will be an act of criminal folly. The resumption, it is clear, does not have majority support in the Congress or the country. An AP survey of the Senate (*Washington Star,* Jan. 26) turned up only 25 Senators willing to say they favored resumption of bombing (an equal number opposed it) and only 18 who were for extending it to Hanoi and Haiphong. Among those who declined to take a position was the Republican leader, Dirksen. Senators rarely heard from on foreign policy were speaking up—Jennings Randolph (*D., W.Va.*) for example; he opposed resumption and said that in a war which had been going on for more than 20 years it was hardly surprising that a peace offensive on our part "no matter how sincere or intensive would fail to yield definitive results in so short a period of time." Twenty-four hours before Washington began to intimate that resumption was imminent, *Le Monde* (dated Jan. 25 but it appeared on Jan. 24) for the first time expressed faith in Johnson's sincerity and urged the other side to take him at his word and negotiate. All this fragile and newly won credibility will be the first victim of the first bomb.

Preposterous "Evidence"

The "evidence" given out to the press at a not-for-attribution briefing the afternoon of Jan. 25 to support resumption is preposterous. More than 200 trucks, for example, were photographed in the southern area of North Vietnam between Dec. 31 and Jan. 13, "most of them" on their way to what is said to be the gateway to the Ho Chi Minh trial. That is an average of 15 trucks a day. That is surprisingly little traffic even for an underdeveloped country. The North Vietnamese are also said—grave crime—to be using the cessation of bombing to repair their roads and bridges. Could we seriously expect to see them left in *dis*repair? We suspect all this nonsense cloaks the real reasons. One of them, as the *Washington Star* explained Jan. 26, is that the U.S. "would appear weak in the eyes of the world" if the bombing were not resumed. Another—and we believe the controlling reason—came to the surface when the *Star's* summary of this same briefing went on to say, "Moreover, the Saigon government is known to favor the attacks, and U.S. officials believe it is important to have a high degree morale in South Vietnam." This was one of the excuses given last February. The morale, of course, is not that of the common people, sick of the war from both sides, but the profiteers, absentee landlords and playboy Generals who are our only political base in the country we mercilessly devastate.

The Administration and the press play down the fact there has been no offensive action by troops on the other side since the New Year truce ended, only scattered terrorist actions and the mortar attack on Da Nang. *Our own intelligence reports no contact with North Vietnamese regulars since last November* while our bombers have been burning up the countryside with fury and our troops have been aggressively seeking out a foe hard to find. These are the possible signals of the de-escalation the President said he wanted, but he ignores instead of exploring them.

No End of Fun in LBJ's White House

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Tony Curtis and Ali Khan turned out to be the most persistent callers during the month-long check of incoming calls at the White House. The check, for what Press Secretary Moyers said was primarily to determine which offices needed all their phones, was called off Monday morning. A corps of switchboard operators from the Army was used to help out the regular White House operators. The extra operators presumably were necessary because of the delays caused by the requirement that callers identify themselves. And since many of the Army operators were unfamiliar with the names of callers who would be known to the regulars, they asked the callers to spell their names. Because so many of the callers became exasperated with the operators they used a rash of aliases. Marvin Watson, the White House appointments secretary instigated the check.

—Washington Star: In Capital Corridors, Jan. 23

Morse Explains Why He Has No Faith in Johnson's Peace Offensive

"The State of the Union message repeated many of the misrepresentations and inconsistencies that have led us to the brink of massive war in Asia. The State Department, the Defense Department and the White House have sought to reduce all our difficulties there to the neat pattern of the 30s, to equate all of Asia with the analogy of Munich, and have used a 'devil' theory to arouse passions against both North Vietnam and China.

"It is weariness with the platitudinous preaching of an administration that seems not to understand the complexities of world affairs that is responsible for the dread and lack of enthusiasm for war in Asia. Said the President, 'because a just nation cannot leave to the cruelty of its enemies a people who have staked their lives and independence on America's solemn pledge.' The only people in South Vietnam who have staked their lives on American support have been the cliques and coteries of business men and military men who have lived for 11 years off American money and support. That is why we hear Ky reject negotiations with the north; that is why this little tinhorn dictator of South Vietnam—whom we financed and set up—is most eager that American bombing of the North be resumed.

"The most flagrant inconsistency in the President's message is the one that has marked our Vietnam policy for 12 years. He declared, 'We stand by the Geneva agreements of 1954 and 1962.' A few sentences later he said: 'We will act as we must to help protect the independence of the valiant people of South Vietnam.' To the extent that they are independent, it is only the extent to which we have made them so in violation of the Geneva agreement. We cannot have it both ways.

"These are the reasons why I am not impressed with the chances that the current peace offensive will culminate in anything but another escalation of the war. We are too committed to our own version of history, our official pronouncements of American purity, and to our oversimplification to allow us the flexibility needed to reach a peace settlement. Can the same men whose miscalculations brought us to the brink of war lead us away from it under the same colors and the same reasoning that proved so fallacious from the beginning?"

—Abridged from a Morse speech in the Senate Jan. 19

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Alaskan Lifts the Curtain on Reassuring But Illusory Talk Last August With LBJ

Gruening in Dramatic Move Would Bar Use of Draftees in Southeast Asia

A focus for militant peace action was provided when Senator Gruening, Jan. 25, with the support of Senator Morse introduced amendments to three pending Vietnamese military and AID bills. These riders provide that no draftees may be sent to Southeast Asia without Congressional approval. Though slighted by most of the press including the *New York Times*, the amendments would force members of Congress to stand up and be counted on expansion of the war. In introducing these measures Senator Gruening disclosed in a speech for Senate delivery that last August 20 he had been about to offer a similar rider to the Defense Appropriation bill then pending in the Senate when he was called to the White House. The President urged him not to introduce the rider and "said that in any event no draftees would be sent to Vietnam before January" unless a "grave national emergency develops."

Serious Effort or Soft-Soap?

In releasing a letter he sent the President at that time, agreeing not to introduce the rider, Senator Gruening lifted the curtain on talks which encouraged pro-peace Senators to believe that Mr. Johnson was seriously seeking peace. The Alaskan said he was especially gratified by Mr. Johnson's press conference statement of July 28 "that there would be no particular problem in bringing the Vietcong and the National Liberation Front to the conference table." The Senator said he was also pleased by the President's readiness for reunification by elections in accordance with the Geneva agreement. "Of course, as I said," the letter continued, referring to their conversation at the White House, "it is difficult to convince those with whom we are seeking to arrange a cessation of hostilities of our bona fides while we continue the bombing of North Vietnam."

In introducing the riders, Senator Gruening injected a new question into debate over the Vietnamese war. He asked why draftees should be sent to Southeast Asia when "over 300,000 well-trained, experienced troops are stationed in Europe." He also put into the Record a Defense Department table which showed that more than $5.5 billions had been spent in fiscal '63, '64 and '65 on Army Reserve and National Guard forces. The Senator asked why draftees should be sent when "hundreds of thousands" of these trained reservists "are going about their daily civilian jobs, sacrificing only one evening a week or one day a month for which they receive pay." This involves basic military and political questions which should be fully aired, particularly in respect to the large U.S. army in West Germany.

Non-Toxic But Deadly?

One Australian soldier has died and several others have been made ill from the effects of "non-toxic" gases in Vietnam. According to the Sydney Morning-Herald (Jan. 13), the Australians were searching a tunnel northwest of Saigon when they spotted two Viet Cong. The troops hurled grenades and then smoke and gas into the corridor. After two hours, assuming that the gas and smoke had dispersed, two engineers returned. The Viet Cong were gone, but the gas and smoke remained. "Smoke and gas stick to the side of the tunnels," explained one engineer later. Although wearing a gas mask, one of the Australians was overcome and fell unconscious. His companion ran for help. The rescue team, after dragging the man out, also was overcome, and had to be hospitalized. The Pentagon's report of the incident is vague. The death of the engineer is attributed to "lack of oxygen and smoke inhalation." Any suggestion that gas may have been a factor is flatly rejected with a stern reminder that "non-toxic" gas is harmless.—P.O.

Two Dispatches from The Mekong Delta Portray the Feudalism We Support

In Long An, one of Vietnam's most fertile provinces more than 85 percent of the peasant population are tenants. This land-ownership pattern may help explain why, despite a tremendous cost in lives and material, the war in Long An is no closer to being won than it was several years ago. . . . [Yet] the rice-rich heartland of the Saigon region and the upper Mekong Delta, linked together by Long An, remains the prize for which the war is being fought. Here, in less than 14 provinces, live almost two-thirds of the 15 million South Vietnamese. . . . American military and civilian advisers agree there are many more Viet Cong than a year ago.

Most important in Long An, however, government and the mass of peasantry still seem to be on the opposing sides. . . . Land is of such paramount importance here that the Viet Cong allow only the landless or very poor farmers to command guerrilla units or qualify as party members. The provincial government's social order is the exact reverse. Most of the military officers, civil servants and community leaders come from the land-owning gentry. The same is true in Saigon where only one of the 10 generals now sharing power has any rapport with the masses. He is Central Vietnam's erratic Maj. Gen. Nguyen Chanh Thi, who also is the only one of peasant origin. . . .

In the delta, out of 1.2 million farms, only 260,000 are owner-operated. . . . Some 3,000 rich Saigon families still are the big landowners.

—Richard Critchfield in the Washington Star, Jan. 24

The village chief, a 36-year old former Army officer named Do Hun Minh . . . explained through an interpreter that only four village youngsters since the year 1950 have been in high school. No youngster in the village has ever attended college. "The Vietnamese government continues to support an exclusive educational system in a revolutionary war," says [Richard] Burnham [the U.S. aid mission province representative]. "All this is the preservation of privilege. It is madness and until it is changed into an American type egalitarian educational system, most of our efforts will be marginal." Those other efforts . . . are considerable. USOM pumps about half a million dollars a year into Kienhoa [province], arranging for medical teams and technical assistance, and building dams, school rooms, a potable water system, an orphanage, three fish markets, two electricity systems. But knowledgable Americans here say that the Vietcong still offer the only outlet for a bright boy from the villages. The static nature of Sondong assures that there is no legitimate route out of the rice paddy. The rural children cannot be officers, administrators or district chiefs."

—Ward Just, in Washington Post, Jan. 23

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Time to Recall How Past Peace Feelers Were Hidden In Disingenuous Palaver

Secretary Rusk Provides A Brilliant Lesson in How Not to Be Candid

We thought readers would like to see for themselves just how hard it is to get a straight answer from Secretary Rusk on peace responses from the other side. This is from the official press conference transcript of January 21:

Q. Mr. Secretary, you spoke of receiving no indication from Hanoi of being interested in peace. Can we assume that, therefore, any reports we may have received from the Russians were negative after the visit of the Soviet delegation to Hanoi, or that we have received no reports from the Russians?

A. I would not wish to embroider on what I said in terms of channels or communications. I am simply saying that we have not received the kind of response for which we were hoping during this period.

[Comment: The questioner's paraphrase was inaccurate: Rusk did not say we had received "no indication from Hanoi of being interested in peace." What Rusk said in his opening statement was that there had been "an overwhelming favorable response" to the peace offensive "except from those who could in fact sit down and make peace." All he says in reply is that the U.S. had not received "the kind of response for which we were hoping." No one asked him what kind of response that was but an attempt was made to get clarification:]

Q. Mr. Secretary, was there specifically no reply by the Hanoi government on the memorandum which was delivered to them by an American diplomat three weeks ago or so?

A. I think my opening statement covers that point.

[Comment: Nowhere in Rusk's opening statement was there any reference to this memorandum. If there was no reply, why not say so?]

Q. Aside from what we can all read, were you telling us that you have had no response from Hanoi or no satisfactory response?

A. Well, I think that I would again go back to my statement: "I regret that I cannot report to you any positive and encouraging response to the hopes of the overwhelming majority of mankind."

[Comment: This seems to imply that there was a response but not one we considered "positive and encouraging." A questioner tried another tack:]

Q. Mr. Secretary, despite that fact, Hanoi and Peking have been discussing out loud your 14 points in some detail, and quarreling with them, of course. Has the United States made an effort either—through any channel—to clarify some of the questions that have been raised on the other side, as to the exact meaning of these points?

[Comment: Instead of answering, the Secretary made an angry little speech:]

A. If they want clarification, they know how to get it. Why are they afraid to come to the table? Why are they afraid to engage in discussions. Why? . . .

[Comment: One possible reason is that they fear we intend to cheat again, as we did after 1954. When Rusk finished his tirade, he was asked:]

Q. Well, is the answer to the question "No?"

A. I beg pardon.

Q. Is the answer to the question "No?" That we have made no effort?

A. No, the answer to the question is the one I gave. [*Laughter*].

[Comment: The answer clearly was "No." It implied that clarification could be obtained only at the conference table. But since coming to the conference table may seriously strain Hanoi's relations with Peking, and leave it at the mercy of our good faith, can it afford to do so without some guaranty that this time we really mean to abide by the Geneva agreements?]

Now You See It, Now You Don't

Mr. Spivack: Well, Mr. Secretary, can you tell us whether the report that the Washington Post published on Saturday that there had been a response from North Vietnam but that we considered the response negative but ambiguous?

Secretary Rusk: No, no, I have not had—and I think I would know about it if there were such a response—I have not seen a response direct or indirect to the United States by Hanoi in this situation.

—On Meet the Press, Jan. 23

"By specifying a reply 'to the United States,' it was learned, Rusk was distinguishing between responses by Hanoi to other nations who passed comments back to the United States and the absence of a reply specifically addressed to the United States."

—Murray Marder in the Washington Post, Jan. 24

Later that same day, on leaving a closed session of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Rusk said there had been "no constructive or responsive move" from the other side. *(Washington Eve. Star, Jan. 24)*

We'll Be Glad to Send A Sample Copy of This Issue To A Friend — Send A Stamped Addressed Envelope

I. F. Stone's Weekly 5618 Nebraska Ave., N. W. Washington, D. C. 20015

Please renew (or enter) a sub for the enclosed $5:

Name .....

Street .....

City .....**Zone**.....**State**.....

1/31/66

For the enclosed $5 send a gift sub to:

(To) Name .....

Street .....

City .....**Zone**.....**State**.....

For $5.35 extra send I. F. Stone's *The Haunted Fifties*

Indicate if announcement wished ☐

I. F. Stone's Weekly
5618 Nebraska Ave., N. W.
Washington, D. C. 20015

Second class postage paid at Washington, D. C.

NEWSPAPER

I. F. Stone's Weekly. Second Class Postage Paid at Washington, D. C. Published every Monday except in August, the last week in December and the first week in January and Bi-Weekly during July at 5618 Nebraska Ave., N.W., Washington, D. C. An independent weekly published and edited by I. F. Stone; Circulation Manager, Esther M. Stone. Subscription: $5 in the U.S.; $6 in Canada; $10 elsewhere. Air Mail rates: $15 to Europe; $20 to Israel, Asia and Africa.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED